DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 445 873 RC 022 658

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TITLE Teaching English to American Indians.
PUB DATE 2000-00-00
NOTE 19p.; In: Learn in Beauty: Indigenous Education for a New Century; see RC 022 648.
AVAILABLE FROM Full text at Web site: http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/LIB/LIB10.html.
PUB TYPE Historical Materials (060) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *American Indian Education; American Indian Languages; *Bilingual Education; *Educational History; *Educational Practices; Elementary Secondary Education; *English (Second Language); Federal Indian Relationship; Immersion Programs; Second Language Learning; Teacher Education; *Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS *Bureau of Indian Affairs Schools

ABSTRACT

Many practices in Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools were negative, but this paper emphasizes the positive efforts that were made throughout their history, especially in regard to teaching English. The Carlisle Indian School, which opened in 1879, encouraged the use of English through an English language student newspaper and frequently praised and rewarded students for speaking English. At the end of the nineteenth century, the "object method," which used objects and realia to help provide comprehensible input, was adapted for use in BIA schools. During the 1930s-40s elements of progressive education, which placed emphasis on the child rather than the subject matter, were used in BIA schools. Local material and daily experiences were used in teaching, early primary reading was based on words that children were already familiar with, and games and activities were used to teach vocabulary and engage students. English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) programs were initiated in Navajo-area BIA schools in the 1960s, and their success was bolstered by the addition of bilingual programs and bilingual teacher training programs. The problem with the all-English immersion teaching methods used in Indian schools was that they were used to replace the children's Native languages rather than to give them an additional language. Indigenous language activists strongly support immersion language programs for indigenous language revitalization, and most of the techniques the BIA adapted or developed to teach English are adaptable to teaching Indian languages as second languages today. (Contains 65 references.) (TD)

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Teaching English to American Indians

Jon Reyhner

The education provided to American Indians by the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) over the last two centuries has received considerable justified criticism by both Indians and non-Indians. However, it is important to realize that the BIA has also attempted to improve the quality of Indian education throughout its history. This paper details efforts within the BIA to improve Indian education, especially in regard to the teaching of English. It concentrates on the use of the "object method" at the end of the Nineteenth Century, the impact of Progressive Education in the 1930s and 40s, and the introduction of English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching methods in the 1960s and 70s.

Many have heard horrible stories of Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and mission schools punishing students for speaking "Indian" and the low academic expectations of these schools. Estelle Brown (1952), who started teaching in Indian schools in the 1897, wrote that teaching for the BIA "called for a belief in the necessity for recreating primitive children in my own image" (p. 42). She went on to write that "a knowledge of their pupil's home environment was not considered necessary since their education aimed to make that environment unsuitable to them" (p. 204). However, perceptive teachers of the time found this assimilationist approach wrong. Brown wrote, "I instinctively felt that, in teaching Indian children to like and want the things we liked and wanted, we were heading in the wrong direction" (p. 42). The "deficit approach" to minority education that Brown describes has been repeatedly criticized (e.g., Swisher & Tippeconnic, 1999), but little note has been taken of the positive efforts made in BIA schools to promote the education of Indian children and the learning of English. This paper describes some of these positive methods, materials, and motivational techniques used by BIA schools in the past that teachers today would do well to contemplate.

Motivating Indigenous language learners

Well researched and designed teaching methods and materials help motivate students by giving them early success through the use of active, student-centered instruction and by providing comprehensible input. However, one should not stop there when considering the all-important issue of having highly motivated students. The issue of motivating students to learn a language is not new. For example, Carlisle Indian School when it opened in 1879 promoted the use of English through an English-language student newspaper and literary societies. Students were praised frequently and received rewards for speaking English.

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No textbooks were used with entering students who could not speak English. The principal of Carlisle's education department in a March 1882 article published in the Dakota Mission's bilingual newspaper *IAPI OAYE* described this approach to tap children's curiosity:

> Almost from the first, by the use of slate and blackboard, the pupils were taught to write and read the names of objects, or short sentences—using script—describing actions. "Harry ran," "Mathew ran," "Lena ran," written upon the slate, at first almost illegibly. . . .
>
> No criticism was made, however awkward the attempt at imitation. . . . This is substantially the method pursued in the institution for the deaf mutes at Hartford, Conn., under the superintendency of Dr. Keep, and fully explained in his book—"First Lessons for the Deaf and Dumb." . . . The phonic method is employed to aid in the pronunciation and discovery of new words. The combination of the phonic and word-method we find especially adapted to our Indian pupils. . . . It is often necessary to show the Indian pupil the proper position of the teeth, tongue and lips, and insist upon his imitation. . . . We believe it is a great mistake to use books at the first . . . also . . .time spent in teaching the alphabet is lost. (Semple, p. 23)

Students taught the alphabet would "parrot" it and if they were found "stupidly droning over a reading book, we throw the book aside and take up objects" (Semple, p. 23). Objects were also used to teach math and some classes kept diaries.

One of the first actions taken at Carlisle Indian School was to start a small student written English-only newspaper, *The School News,* that was filled with student written material in which students exhorted each other to just speak English. Sophie Rachel wrote her brother in the October 1881 issue,

> I want you to try to talk English every day and I want talk now I must try try hard to talk this time and when we go home we must teach our own people I want to talk English every day and not to talk old Sioux....No let us stop that this time if you do not know how to talk just try (*sic*). (Vol. 2, No. 5, p. 3).

The school had been only open two years then and, according to that issue of *The School News*, only two students spoke English reasonably well. However, it is clear that a concerted campaign was being made to encourage the speaking of English, and that positive rewards were being given to motivate students. The importance of praising and rewarding student efforts for learning to take place is well documented (e.g., Chance, 1992).

Littlebear (1999) and others have spoken about how students learning their tribal language as a second language are often criticized by elders and peers for their poor pronunciation and grammar. Discouragement in the process of learn-

ing English or any other language can be fatal to language learning efforts. Language learners need encouragement rather than criticism to help keep them motivated, especially during the early stages of learning a new language. However, relying on no explicit correction of errors that extreme advocates of the "Natural Approach" (Krashen & Terrell, 1983) promote can lead to students habitualizing the use of grammar and pronunciation errors (Rivers, 1994; Higgs & Clifford, 1982).

Pestalozzi's "Object Method"

Swiss educator and writer Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi's (1747-1827) ideas for educating the children of the poor exerted considerable influence on education in Europe and America in the nineteenth century. Pestalozzi rejected the classical approach to learning of his time, which stressed discipline and memorization. In sharp contrast to the verbal education of the day, Pestalozzi stressed the use of the natural environment as a source of educational opportunities and the use of children's senses, beginning with the use of objects found in children's immediate experience (Gutek, 1968).

Educators that read Pestalozzi's writings and visited his schools spread his ideas across Europe and to America. American educator Henry Barnard (1811-1900) published in 1859 a collection of his essays titled *Pestalozzi and Pestalozzianism*, and Edward A. Sheldon (1823-1897) popularized "the narrow English conception of the formal object lesson into teacher education" at the Oswego Normal School (Gutek, 1968, p. 163). According to Gutek, "The basic operating principle at Oswego was that all knowledge derived from sense perception and that all instruction should be based on real objects" (1968, p. 162).

As was previously mentioned at Carlisle, the use of objects was introduced early-on in Indian Schools. BIA schools picked up on the Americanized ideas of Pestalozzi under the title of the "object method." This use of real objects in teaching had the potential of providing what Stephen Krashen now calls "comprehensible input" for students. According to Superintendent of Indian Schools Estelle Reel in the BIA's 1905 annual report,

> It was found that the most successful teachers worked objectively altogether, using articles with which the pupils were familiar and gradually bringing them to associate the English name of the object, spoken and written, with the object itself; many teachers were adhering too closely to text-books. (*ARCIA*, 1905, p. 397)

Her office distributed sample lessons to teachers to improve instruction.

Using the object method with Indian children was an improvement over using words without anything to give those words meaning, which led to the "parroting" described by Luther Standing Bear and others. Standing Bear (1928), who became a teacher at the end of the nineteenth century wrote,

> The Indian children should have been taught how to translate the Sioux tongue into English properly; but the English teachers only taught them the English language, like a bunch of parrots. While they could read all the words placed before them, they did not know the proper use of them; their meaning was a puzzle. (p. 239)

However, the rejection of the importance of what Pestallozzi called the "home circle," which he credited as "the origin of all education," in most boarding school education made reference to Pestalozzi a travesty. Gerald Gutek, a biographer of Pestalozzi, maintains that Pestalozzi would have hardly recognized the formalized object lessons used in England and America that he was credited with inspiring. For example, Don Talayesva, a Hopi, described his first experience with a BIA school in 1899,

> The first thing I learned in school was "nail," a hard word to remember. Every day when we entered the classroom a nail lay on the desk. The teacher would take it up and say, "What is this?" Finally I answered "nail" ahead of the other boys and was called "bright." (1942, p. 90)

A better example of using objects in teaching was the use of "sand tables" in one-room day schools on the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations in South Dakota at the turn of the century. The 1903 *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* (*ARCIA*) contained a description and picture of a sand table, a sandbox built onto a tabletop, used for teaching primary students, sometimes by older students (see Figure 1). "The table is arranged like a home with irrigating ditch, ridge, fence posts made out of clothespins, house, etc. The pupil teacher says to the class, say 'the horse,' then 'the horse runs,' etc." (*ARCIA*, 1903, pp. 376-377). The table was changed to suit the seasons of the year. Reel in her 1904 annual report again described the "sand table" and "teaching objectively" as working well and called for teachers to find out about their students' home life, interests, and individual characteristics.

Reel's description of using objects is very similar to the use of "realia" discussed recently by Edwina Hoffman (1992). Janette Woodruff (1939), matron working with Crow students in 1903, reported that "There always had to be a concrete, an objective way of presenting an idea" to the students (p. 65). In 1908 at Pyramid Lake, she described using picture writing to teach, "substituting drawings for words wherever possible" and using a "story and objective" teaching method (p. 169). This is an early example of what is now called Rebus writing.

Publishing students' work

The idea of printing students' writing that Richard Henry Pratt initiated at Carlisle Indian school was continued in other BIA boarding schools (see Figure 2). The 1905 Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs described the setting up of print shop in the Albuquerque Indian School as a means of

Figure 1. Students at Pine Ridge Day School No. 27 using a Sand Table (Picture from the 1903 *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*)

Figure 2. Carlisle Indian School's Print Shop (Picture from the 1903 *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*)

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getting students to learn to write, and Chilocco Boarding School was described as having the most extensive print shop in the Indian Service:

> A new plan for teaching language has been put into practice the past year. . . . The teacher of language and her class are constituted the staff—editors and reporters—of a weekly journal. They gather news all about the school and bring it to the classroom, where it is itemized and paragraphed. Criticisms are made. The paragraphs are boiled down to make them concise and simple . . . sent to print shop edited and corrected" (*ARCIA*, 1905, p. 428).

Progressive criticism of Indian education

The spirit of Pestalozzi's educational philosophy was continued into the twentieth century with the growing popularity of what came to be called Progressive Education. Progressive Education became popular at the same time more and more Indian children were being enrolled in schools. A government sponsored report, commonly known at the Meriam Report (1928) examined BIA education from a Progressive Education perspective and found it failing Indian children. In 1929 Charles Rhodes, the new Commissioner of Indian Affairs, echoed the Meriam Report, emphasizing local material and the use of Indian daily experiences in teaching students, and he explicitly mentioned Progressive Education in his 1930 annual report where he wrote, "Emphasis is being placed upon the importance of basing all early primary reading on words that already have a place in the children's speaking vocabulary" (*ARCIA*, 1930, p. 9). He also declared "All Navajo schools now have native weavers who teach blanket weaving to girls" (*ARCIA*, 1930, p. 11). The next year Rhodes encouraged elementary teachers to urge their students "to write about their own Indian life, and to depict their own customs, their own legends, their own economic and social activities" (*ARCIA*, 1931, p. 7). This emphasis on building on students prior experiences and knowledge is emphasized in today's constructivist learning theory (Ellis & Founts, 1993).

The president of the Progressive Education Association wrote in 1930 that "the child rather than what he studies, should be the centre of all educational effort and that a scientific attitude toward new educational ideas is the best guarantee of progress" (Fowler, p. 159). Like Whole Language today, advocates of Progressive Education maintained that it "could not be defined, that it was a 'spirit,' a 'method,' an 'outlook,' a 'matter of emphasis'" (Cremin, 1961, p. 258). John Dewey, considered the father of Progressive Education, saw it as an alternative to traditional education that was academic in orientation and divorced from the realities students faced. At the University of Chicago he found a laboratory school in 1896 to test out his theories. The problems he faced are indicated by a story he tells about trying to furnish his new school. All the desks at the school supply houses were designed for students to sit passively listening and studying whereas Dewey was interested in getting furniture where students

could be active learners (Dewey, 1900). Dewey is famous for his dictum "learning by doing," which fits in with modern constructivist learning theory.

Using materials that relate learning to students' experiential background

The February 1932 issue of the journal *Progressive Education* was devoted to Indian education and the lead article was written by W. Carson Ryan, Jr. and Rose K. Brandt, respectively the director of education and the supervisor of elementary education for the United States Indian Service. They declared that summer school training for Indian service teachers should include among other things:

- Environmental experiences of children as a basis for school procedure and curriculum content.
- Philosophy of progressive education, basing school work on activities and at the same time recognizing and providing opportunities for various learning outcomes rather than beginning and ending teaching procedures mainly with subject matter. (p. 83)

In the same 1932 special issue, Nancy Heger, a teacher at Eastern Navajo School, Crown Point, New Mexico, in her article "Before Books in an Indian School" saw the school lunch as the place to start teaching English, with students learning names for utensils and different kinds of food. She also recommended games to teach vocabulary and noted how,

> The sand table provides another center of never-failing interest an opportunity for vocabulary building. Here are constructed houses such as we live in, barns, schoolhouse, sidewalks, windmill, stores, chicken houses, pens, fences, troughs, trees, tanks, church, garages, trucks, cars—all illustrative of the school and agency or the home community.
>
> Usually, the first sand-table scene consists of the school village. (p. 143)

Helen Lawhead, a first grade teacher at the Theodore Roosevelt Boarding School at Fort Apache, Arizona, wrote in the same issue on "Teaching Navajo Children to Read." She felt that Navajo students should not be expected to learn to read English without first developing some oral English vocabulary. Students would often read aloud well yet not comprehend what they were reading. She declared that "The child's own experiences should form the basis of his reading materials" (p. 133). She wanted reading material with "simple sentences" and "plenty of action." Her students would make original drawing for their favorite stories and would dramatize scenes from them. She also used a sand table to "make the story." These suggested dramatizations are recommended today in second language teaching under the title "TPR Storytelling" (Cantoni, 1999).

In a section titled "Language Experiments of Children" contributed by Rose Brandt, the 1932 special issue had the following information:

> The children talk over their experiences in group discussion, the teacher keeping a written record on the blackboard of their comments. These are later presented to the children to be read on large charts or in the form of booklets which have been hektographed or written on typewriters having Primer type faces. (Language, 1932, p. 154)

Two examples of first grade stories from Toadlena, New Mexico were given:

> **Navajo Father**
>
> Navajo father wears a shirt and pants. Navajo father wears a green head band. He wears red kil'chi on his feet. He wears a blanket to keep him warm. Navajo father wears blue ear rings. He wears beads on his neck.
>
> Navajo father works. He plows the ground. He plants corn and watermelons. He makes the hogan. He chops the tree. He chops wood. He takes care of goats and sheep. He rides the horse.
>
> **Navajo Mother**
>
> Navajo mother wears a Navajo dress. A Navajo dress is a long dress. She wears beads on her neck. She wears shoes on her feet. Sometimes she wears kil'chi on her feet. She wears ear rings in her ears. She wears stockings. Navajo mother wears no head band. Navajo mother wears long hair. She ties it with a string.
>
> Navajo mother works. She makes bread. She cooks corn, meat, potatoes, coffee, and pumpkins. The Navajos eat it. She makes the blanket. She makes kil'chi and a cradle. She makes a dress and shirt for father. She rides the horse. (Language, 1932, p. 154)

In a 1935 article in the BIA publication *Indians at Work*, Rose Brandt described in an article titled "We Make Our Own Books" how older kids wrote books for younger students to get vocabulary familiar to the students and how fourth graders at Todalena wrote chapters on home life, history, customs, ceremonials, and legends.

Having students write for authentic purposes

Ryan's replacement as the BIA's Director of Education in 1936 was Willard Beatty, president of Progressive Education Association, who continued John Dewey's and the Progressive Education Association's emphasis on learning from experience and the development of community schools. In his memoirs, Indian commissioner John Collier (1963) was appreciative of the environmental and conservation curriculum that Beatty introduced into the schools. Collier noted in his autobiography that "Beatty began to build activities in the Indian day schools around the conserving and using of natural resources," and he noted that he and Beatty "intended that school life become bilingual, and that the schools should serve adult and child alike" (1963, pp. 195-196). According to Collier,

Beatty "scoured" the Navajo reservation recruiting Navajo teachers, Navajo assistants, and translators. Beatty started some of the first bilingual and English as a Second Language (ESL) training programs in the United States (Szasz, 1977). Beatty's efforts led to the publication by the BIA of Young and Morgan's (1943) *The Navaho Language: The Elements of Navaho Grammar with a Dictionary in Two Parts Containing Vocabularies of Navaho and English* and the *Indian Life Series* of bilingual pamphlets.

Providing inservice training for teachers

Both Beatty and Collier were aware of other countries' educational approaches to indigenous education, especially Mexico's, and foreign criticism of the United States' treatment of its native population. Summer Institutes were held to give teachers special training in teaching Indian students, and a bimonthly bulletin, *Indian Education*, was started by Beatty shortly after he became the BIA education director to disseminate his policies and new educational methods. In 1941 a Hopi teacher, Polingaysi Qöyawayma, was chosen to demonstrate her teaching methods to other BIA educators at a summer training institute. She had found that her method of educating children starting "from what they already know, not from a totally new, strange field of experience" reduced the chance her students would withdraw into a shell (1964, pp. 151 & 174). She wrote a friend the same year:

> If the teachers to the Hopi or other tribes would come to them [their students] with human interest and love and take them for what they are and where they are and begin from their world with them results would be success. There should be less teacher dominance and theories. . . . teacher and child should meet on mutual ground. (1983, p. 51)

Florence Little, one of the first Navajo "college graduate" teachers, took a similar approach. She used words such as *yucca, piñon*, and *hogan* as her initial English vocabulary for her beginning students rather than *post office, bank*, and *skyscraper* (Boyce, 1974).

Progressive Education: The Project Method

The educational psychologist William Heard Kilpatrick wrote in Columbia University's *Teachers College Record* in 1918 about the "project method," which was to involve students in "purposeful acts." According to Kilpatrick, "whole hearted purposeful activity in a social situation as the typical unit of school procedure is the best guarantee of the utilization of the child's native capacities now too often frequently wasted" (p. 18). But in turn he also warned against foolishly humoring childish whims. The next year Branom in a book titled *The Project Method in Education* described projects as having to be related to the student's interests and needs.

John Dewey added a short chapter on projects in the 1933 edition of his classic book *How We Think*. He wrote that "constructive occupations" or "projects" are characterized by the following conditions:

1. **Engage interest**: "Unless the activity lays hold on the emotions and desires, unless it offers an outlet for energy that means something to the individual himself, his mind will turn in aversion from it, even though externally he keeps at it."
2. **Intrinsic worth**: "the activity must be worth while intrinsically." Projects must "stand for something valuable in life itself."
3. **Awaken curiosity**: The project must "awaken new curiosity and create a demand for information."
4. **Time span**: "the project must involve a considerable time span for its adequate execution, The plan and the object to be gained must be capable of development, one thing leading on naturally to another.... It is not a succession of unrelated acts, but is a consecutively ordered activity in which one step prepares the need for the next one and that one adds to, and carries further in a cumulative way, what has already been done." (Dewey, 1998/1933, pp. 218-219)

Gordon MacGregor's (1964) reported that the "project method" was used very successfully in schools for Pine Ridge Sioux in the 1940s. He found that projects allowed students to work cooperatively as they did at home and for bilingual students to translate for students who spoke no English. Today, this project method goes under names such as the explorer curriculum, enterprises, and the like (McCarty & Schafer, 1992). Another approach used in the Progressive Era was what is today called thematic units. A detailed example of a unit on boats from about 1920 is reproduced by Cremin (1961) from the Lincoln School, a laboratory school at Columbia University.

The end of Progressive Education

In 1949 Hildegard Thompson, who was then supervising all Navajo education programs, justified BIA teaching methods when Navajos demanded that their children to get the same type of education as white children:

> Once, an entire day was spent with the Navajo Tribal Council explaining the methods used in teaching English to non-English-speaking Navajo beginners. Many Navajos at that time were critical of methods used in federal schools. Teachers provided a variety of first-hand experiences, much of which was in the form of play, to make oral English meaningful to small Navajo-speaking beginners. This did not look like good teaching to some Navajos. I used a pictorial chart showing the early experiences and language learning of two children—one learning in Navajo, the other in English. After sketching the learning experiences of each child to age six, I put the picture of the Navajo child

> beside the picture of the English-speaking child, each shown with a speaking vocabulary of 2,000 words, and I simultaneously removed from the mouth of the Navajo child all of the Navajo vocabulary in which he had learned to converse. Then I explained that both children entered school and that the child had to learn to talk in the language of the school—English—but that the English-speaking child was six years ahead of him in English language. I then showed some of the materials and toys which Barbara Henderson, a Navajo who taught at Beclabito, used to help overcome the English language deficit of Navajo beginners; and I explained how she used the materials. "This might seem that she was letting children play," I pointed out, "but she uses the children's play to teach them enough English so that they can begin their primary grade work." (Thompson, 1975, p. 13)

After leaving Navajoland Thompson took over from Willard Beatty in Washington, D.C. She wrote in 1965 about experiments going on at Rock Point (later one of the first community-controlled schools with a strong bilingual program) and Shiprock, which she said affirmed the Bureau's basics principles and premises on which the BIA's English language program for the primary grades:

> 1. The development of spoken English precedes the development of English reading and writing skills. The Bureau sets aside the first year of school for the development of oral English, and oral English is emphasized throughout the grades. . . .
> 2. Spoken English in the early elementary grades should be developed in association with classroom, home, and community experiences. This practice recognizes that language learning accrues from experience, and in the beginning from concrete experiences.
> 3. Experiences provide the meaning content of language. Oral English expression should be welded to meaning since expression and meaning are inseparable in the communication of thought. Patterned drill is important to establish English patterns of expression, but patterned drill is undertaken in close association with meaning.
>
> To summarize, oral language development requires that the individual learn to recognize and then to produce the complete sound system of English, to make the correct association between meaning and expression, and to make English patterns of expression a matter of habit. (p. 3)

Thompson asked teachers to ask themselves these questions: "Am I relating my oral English teaching to firsthand experiences? Do I make use of the everyday things children do at school, and do I provide children with a wealth of experiences to enrich their background?" (1965, p. 3).

English as a Second Language (ESL) in Navajo Area BIA schools

Rock Point in 1960 was one of the most isolated of eight Chinle Agency BIA schools, and it "ranked at the bottom in student achievement as measured by standardized tests" (Vorih & Rosier, 1978, p. 263). An intensive Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) program was started in 1963 at Rock Point resulted in its scores moving to the top of the Agency, but they were still two years behind national norms at sixth grade in reading and math. Because of this continued lag in student achievement, Rock Point started a bilingual education program in 1967 using ESEA Title 1 funds. But the bilingual program remained limited till 1971 when ESEA Title VII Bilingual Education Act funds were received. Rock Point Navajo aides were trained as teachers, spending their summers taking courses at Northern Arizona University. "In 1977 fifteen Navajos received their BA degrees" and "staff adapted, translate[d], or wrote their own materials" in Navajo (Vorih & Rosier, 1978, p. 268).

In 1967 1,000 BIA teachers attended an ESL workshop at Fort Wingate, New Mexico, and the Bureau issued the same year a booklet titled *ESL for Navajos: An Overview of Certain Cultural and Linguistic Features* by the linguist Robert Young and revised it into 169 pages the next year (New Curriculum 1970; Young 1968). The booklet described the teaching implications of cultural differences and provided a contrastive analysis of Navajo and English. During the school year 1970-71, the Bureau was offering bilingual-bicultural kindergarten and first grade instruction in four BIA schools (Saville, 1970).

Early on it was recognized that ESL was just part of a total bilingual program as was the case at Rock Point. Spolsky (1973) estimated that in 1972 there were 50,000 Navajo students and that 98% of them entering BIA schools and 90% entering public schools were Navajo speakers. In the beginning there was little public school participation in these initiatives. For example, there were no Arizona public school representatives at a Navajo Bilingual-Bicultural Materials Conference held in Albuquerque in 1972 (Kari, 1973).

Spolsky found that Navajo ESL programs were ineffective and that teachers needed to be bilingual, stating in 1973 in the lead article in a Bureau of Indian Affairs publication that "Bilingual education has become a pressing need for Navajo schools; without it, Navajo students are doomed to inferior education" and that Navajo bilingual teachers were needed to teach Navajo students (1973, pp. 1-2).

In the fall of 1969, approximately 200 new teachers were hired to serve Navajo BIA schools, and their reaction to being told they need to teach ESL was "What is it?" (Harvey, 1970, p. 23). The then current focus of ESL was on oral practice and pattern drill in primary grades with not much for teachers of older students. In June 1969 the BIA held a workshop Brigham City, Utah, for its teachers to look at "all commercially available materials for teaching ESL at the intermediate and secondary levels" (Harvey, 1970, p. 25). Starting in November of that year, Dr. Gina Cantoni spent one or more days each week in 17 Navajo Area BIA schools observing, demonstrating, and offering encouragement, help, and advice for teaching ESL to Navajo students. The same year the BIA pub-

lished a monograph on *Teaching English to speakers of Choctaw, Navajo and Papago: A Contrastive Approach* (Ohannessian & Gage, 1969) that compared and contrasted the grammar and sounds of English with three Indian languages. Dr. Cantoni directed annual "Navajo Summer Institutes in Linguistics and ESL for Teachers" from 1971 to 1975 and co-directed national seminars on Indian education from 1972 to 1975.

At Albuquerque Indian School students were one year behind in third grade and three years behind in seventh grade, and Annabelle Scoon wrote in the *TESOL Quarterly* in 1971 that "the results of TESL efforts have not been especially successful. Drills and pattern practice improve certain surface aspects of the students' language, but higher level abilities still do not develop" (Scoon, 1971, p. 286). She continued,

> If the students find that they can learn about the really important things in their lives just by making the effort to express themselves in English, we will find them talking. This has been demonstrated in classrooms that I have visited repeatedly. The quiet, monosyllabic Indian students will soon be interrupting each other to get a chance to talk, if the discussion concerns things they really want to know. Whenever they feel that they can learn something they want to learn, the language will grow to meet the demand. A student will work hard to find a means of expression for an idea he wants to express. Perhaps the area of affect is one of the first places we would seek for the content of lessons that will motivate the student to improve his English. (Scoon, 1971, pp. 290-91)

Gina Cantoni wrote in 1977 that the common practice in Round Robin reading instruction of "interrupting a child's oral reading to point out his deviant rendition of a word does not help his understanding of the text." (Cantoni-Harvey, p. 230). She advised that teachers should model standard English but not constantly correct students' nonstandard English, and she emphasized that,

> The respect for the learner's home dialect, which is so important in the early grades, should not be set aside when the need arises for instruction in Standard English. Red [Indian] English may be encouraged to develop its fullest range of expressive power and flexibility in creative writing, where the freedom from certain grammatical restrictions, the slightly different connotations of lexical items, as well as some direct translation from the Indian language, along with the rich content of Indian tradition, may result in poetry and prose more exciting than the correct but cliché -ridden out put of the Standard speakers. (Cantoni-Harvey, 1977, p. 232)

Later in 1983 she wrote,

> I proposed that English-as-a-Second-Language be taught not as a separate subject but as an integral component of each content area; in other words, I felt that the particular needs of the student population would be served more effectively by an ESP (English for specific purposes) approach than by the more general ESL. (Cantoni-Harvey, p. 178).

"English Plus" language policy

As was the case with the educational leaders at Rock Point Community School, Dr. Cantoni found that ESL alone was not enough to bring Navajo students up to national academic standards. From 1988 to 1995 she ran bilingual teacher training programs for teachers of Indian students at Northern Arizona University, and in 1994 and 1995 she and Dr. Dick Heiser held the first two Stabilizing Indigenous Languages symposiums to help implement the Native American Languages Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-477) that made it U.S. Government policy to support, protect, and promote Native American languages.

For most of the history of BIA education, the popular idea was that Indian students who gave up their Native language and culture would do better academically in schools. However, Researchers Donna Deyhle and Karen Swisher (1997) found that Indians students who were more traditional did as well or better academically as students who were more assimilated. Beyond academic performance, concurrent with the loss of indigenous languages has been a rise of gang activity among Indian youth, Dr. Richard Littlebear (1999) writes movingly on how tribes already have all the signs, symbols, colors, and "turf" that today's youth are seeking when they join gangs. Gangs are an attempt by youth to gain a sense of identity and belonging that has been denied them in a world of cultural homogenization, large impersonal schools, and mass marketing. In addition, these culturally lost children who join gangs in their search for identity are more susceptible to the allure of drugs and alcohol and learn the more negative aspects of the mainstream culture through television, movies, and popular music. Indigenous education should be a part of a movement for spiritual renewal and healing that is badly needed both among many indigenous communities and in the world as a whole. The loss of traditional cultural values, whether they be of American Indian or European origin, in our schools has helped contribute to tragedies such as the recent one in Littleton, Colorado. As I have maintained previously (Reyhner, 1999), children who learn their indigenous language and culture at their mother's breast pick up immunities from the diseases of modern life that lead them to join youth gangs, abuse drugs and alcohol, and become members of a rootless consumer society.

Conclusion

Many practices in BIA schools were negative, but this paper has emphasized the positive aspects of ESL teaching that were implemented, such as using objects/realia to help provide comprehensible input, using students' prior experience in teaching reading, and encouraging language practice through talking, writing, and publishing. Ironically, most, if not all, of the techniques the BIA

adapted or developed to teach English are adaptable to teaching Indian languages as second languages today. As we see educational movements such as Progressive Education and Whole Language grow and decline both in and out of Indigenous education, it is important to remember what has worked in Indian education rather than just dwelling on the failures and to pass on this positive knowledge from the past to new teachers.

The problem with the all-English immersion teaching methods used in Indian schools were not the methods *per se*, but the fact that they were used to replace the children's Native languages rather than to give children an additional language. Indigenous language activists have recently strongly supported immersion language teaching methods for indigenous language revitalization. For example, in 1992 Dr. Richard Littlebear wrote a column "TPR Works" in the newsletter of the National Association for Bilingual Education and later put together a short training manual titled "A model for promoting Native American language education and teaching" (Littlebear,1996) emphasizing Total Physical Response. Dr. Steve Greymorning (1997 & 1999) did an extensive study to improve Arapaho language classes in the Wyoming Indian School District and also concluded that immersion was the way to go. Immersion teaching methods initially call for the use of physical action and physical objects (realia) to help provide the comprehensible input necessary for language learning. More advanced immersion lessons usually involve literacy, and teaching materials usually include storybooks. Chosen carefully and used thoughtfully, many of the techniques used at Carlisle, in classrooms influenced by Progressive Education, and in BIA ESL classrooms in the 1970s can be used successfully in indigenous bilingual classrooms today.

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